

**ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY
PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
HYBRID/WEBEX
January 8, 2025
8:30 a.m.**

**Originating at:
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200
Anchorage, Alaska 99508**

Trustees Present:

Agnes Moran, Chair
Rhonda Boyles (Virtual)
Kevin Fimon

Other Trustees Present:

Anita Halterman
John Morris
Corri Feige (Virtual)
Brent Fisher

Trust Staff Present:

Allison Biastock
Katie Baldwin-Johnson
Shannon Cochran
Valette Keller
Julee Farley
Luke Lind
Carrie Predeger
Michael Baldwin
Eric Boyer
Kelda Barstad
Tina Voelker-Ross
Eliza Muse
Debbie DeLong
Heather Phelps
Kat Roch

Trust Land Office staff present:

Jusdi Warner
Jeff Green
Sarah Morrison
Blain Alfonso
Cole Hendrickson
Pam Cawley
Brittany Williams
Katie Vachris
Ashley Oien

Also participating:

Gene Hickey; Terry Bookey; Tricia Franklin; Katie Yaniec; Daniel Delfino; Teri Tibbett; Donald Gotchal; Jennifer Smerud; Steve Center; Sarah Neuschwander; Regan Mattingly; Patrick Reinhart; Steph Hopkins; Paloma Harbour; Janie Caq'ar Ferguson; Madison Smith; Shannon McCain; Josie Stern; Andy Petroni; Stephanie Wheeler; Julia Moriarty; Mary Wilson; Christopher Orman; Brittany Williams.

PROCEEDINGS

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR MORAN stated that this was the first meeting with the new committee structure, and called the Program & Planning Committee to order. She began with a roll call of the board members on the committee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHAIR MORAN asked for any announcements.

CEO BIASTOCK reintroduced Shannon Cochran, the new special assistant at the Trust. She is replacing Miri Smith-Coolidge and will be supporting the meetings, as well as much of the Trust's work. She was excited to have her on board, and welcomed her.

CHAIR MORAN welcomed Ms. Cochran, and asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: A motion to approve the agenda, as presented, was made by TRUSTEE FIMON; seconded by TRUSTEE BOYLES.

After the roll-vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)

ETHICS DISCLOSURES

CHAIR MORAN asked for any ethics disclosures. There being none, she asked for a motion to approve the minutes from October 17, 2024.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: A motion to approve the minutes from October 17, 2024, was made by TRUSTEE FIMON; seconded by TRUSTEE BOYLES.

After the roll-vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)

GRANT APPROVAL CONSENT AGENDA CONCEPT

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON stated that the first step on the agenda is a sample consent agenda that they were bringing forward as an option for how they might proceed in February. As the Trust moved to implement the changes of granting and the authority of grant-making, more grants and more proposals will be coming before trustees. Currently, those opportunities are at

the Full Board meetings four times a year. She continued that one of the conversations with Chair Moran was the option of a consent agenda. There is an example in the packet of how this might be done, which she explained.

CHAIR MORAN added that it started with the \$50,000 level, which can be increased or decreased going forward. Even though they are lumped together, a discussion on them could still go forward.

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON added that the same amount of information about the proposal would also be seen. They would have every individual memo, the staff analysis, and all the other information for review in advance of the Board Meeting.

TRUSTEE BOYLES stated that it made sense and is just a more detailed approval, and she liked it.

TRUSTEE FIMON stated that if it helps to get through the process more efficiently, that is good. He appreciated the fact that there would still be an opportunity to discuss any of them individually, and was in agreement.

CHAIR MORAN stated that all were in agreement in moving this forward. She continued to the Governor's Budget.

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

CEO BIASTOCK provided a brief update on the FY26 State of Alaska budget. Following the stakeholder engagement process, staff worked with partners, including State of Alaska partners, in developing budget recommendations for the Board of Trustees. Those were presented last summer, resulting in consideration of the amendment and the final FY26 Trust budget. There is a statutory deadline, September 15, by which that budget is submitted to the State of Alaska and Legislature each year. There is also a statutory obligation to make recommendations to the State of Alaska for GF use to support Trust beneficiaries. She shared that the GF/MH recommendations this year were about a million dollars less than the GF/MH recommendation totals last year. She also noted that this update is being offered at the very beginning of the state budget process, which will take about six months to finalize. She then talked about which items were funded at what amounts and briefly walked through them. She stated that part of the CEO's duties is the Trust Legislative Program. This is where they have the opportunity to communicate with lawmakers around what the Trust has identified as priorities for the use of General Fund dollars. She continued that they would continue to advocate that these are good uses of Trust funds. She added that this information is shared when they present to the House and Senate Finance Committees.

CHAIR MORAN asked about scheduling another Program & Planning meeting before virtually, as long as it was properly noticed.

CEO BIASTOCK noted that if any additional information was needed about specific items, there are great materials available, and staff would be happy to share them.

CHAIR MORAN called a five-minute break.

(Break.)

CHAIR MORAN called the meeting back to order. She announced that Brent Fisher and John Morris were in the room.

SHARP LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON asked Eric Boyer, Senior Program Officer, to introduce the guests and the presentation.

MR. BOYER explained that the SHARP program is referred to as the Health Care Professionals Workforce Enhancement Program in Alaska Statute 18.29. The program itself is housed within the Department of Health and the Division of Public Health. He introduced Terry Bookey, the Outreach Coordinator, Tricia Franklin, the Unit Manager, both at the Office of Healthcare Access. The program coordinator is Katie Yaniec. Mr. Bookey will give the trustees the background on this program and the role that the Trust can play to support the organization.

MR. BOOKEY stated appreciation for the opportunity to talk about the SHARP program. He continued that his background is in public safety, and he also served on the Kenai City Council for six years. Through that he got an introduction into what the Mental Health Trust does and the impact it has on communities. He also expressed his personal gratitude to the Board and each of the trustees for the work they do for beneficiaries. It is applaudable and greatly appreciated. He stated that he works directly with the SHARP program and was excited to talk about the Healthcare Professionals Workforce Enhancement Program. He talked about their four main objectives: Expanding access to healthcare; the need to attract and retain healthcare professionals, leading to a long-term work stability; and then having equitable healthcare access throughout Alaska. He moved to the eligibility requirements for the healthcare professionals under this program.

MR. BOYER explained that the advisory board determines the priorities and then the applications, and participants are reviewed. Those priorities are taken into consideration if funding restrictions are currently being experienced. The majority in the healthcare professionals program are employer-funded and led. If an employer is eligible and willing to sponsor an eligible employee, then they will be sponsored through the program. To date, the funding has been sufficient. The SHARP Council membership is approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Health. That council is made up of 15 members, and those member organizations are all the trade associations.

MR. BOOKEY stated that the Outreach Coordinator position is a new position that he started in July. Part of their midterm goals is to have marketing, and outreach schedules and plans in place to look to target specific regions or specific professions that seek feedback from the council. He continued to eligibility for healthcare professionals and talked about the requirements. He stated that healthcare disciplines were divided into three tiers. The tier 1 participants are the high level: doctors, dentists, psychologists, and psychiatrics. Tier 2 are mid-level professionals which include nurse practitioners, physician assistants, dental hygienists, licensed counselors, behavioral health counselors. Tier 3 encompasses other disciplines that are supporting access to healthcare services or behavioral health services. Tier 2 and Tier 3 individuals must have an active license in Alaska or a specific exemption such as with Indian Health Services, and are in good standing during their term with the program. Tier 3 does not require a license unless it is a

requirement of their certification or licensures. There is also the service component and the service commitment, which he explained.

TRUSTEE MORRIS asked if providers all accept Medicare, Medicaid, VA benefits.

MR. BOOKEY replied that a requirement of the program is that any of those Federal benefit programs must be accepted.

CHAIR MORAN stated that Trustee Feige had joined online.

MR. BOOKEY stated that, for the program to be successful, compliance and monitoring is essential. The employers are required to submit a quarterly work report that documents service hours, the distribution of services and types of care provided by each healthcare professional that participates in the program, which must be submitted within 30 days of the end of each quarter cycle. That helps to assess impacts as far as number of service visits, number of safety net visits, and things of that nature. The employers are tasked with collecting that information, summarizing patient impact data, the number of visits, number of patients by different demographic breakdowns. He then discussed the incentive programs. He continued to talk about the impact seen in a number of the visits from participants in the programs.

MR. BOYER pointed out that this aligns with the Comprehensive Integrated Healthcare Plan. The next iteration of that comp plan began in January, 2025, and that focus fits in with workforce recruitment and retention. Partners have been really supportive and communicative over the years of bringing this program forward. Next they get into working in terms of recommendations for how they want to support this program going forward as the Trust. The history of the Trust is pretty short in terms of supporting agencies with that funding. The funding that has been trustee-approved over the years has gone to the Division of Public Health to support their infrastructure to be able to administer this program. He explained in more detail, and brought forward some of the recommendations.

MR. BOOKEY talked about the very hard-to-fill positions. The employer must document a sustained recruitment challenge over the previous 12 months. There has to be a 12-month vacancy determination. They had to have attempted to fill the role, or were only able to support the role through a locum. If they had not hired someone for the role that they had interviewed, they need to provide reasons as to why those candidates were not acceptable for the open position. Based on meeting those qualifications listed in the statute and regulation, they then would be eligible for that award increase. He talked about the penalties for professionals that become noncompliant, as well as for employer organizations. He added that if an employer is terminated from the program, they still remain financially responsible for any commitments that they have with the Department and their professionals up to that date, and would not be able to have new participants participating. He added that he had shared how the program was modified to be more reflective of the needs in the state. He stated appreciation for the opportunity to speak today.

CHAIR MORAN called a break.

(Break.)

AHFC/TRUST HOUSING INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

MS. BARSTAD began with a brief overview on the work being done on the housing area focus area and some of the work done with partners in looking to the future. She added that there would be a presentation from Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, as well. She moved to the housing area focus area priorities, which outlined the spending in the budget. They have not changed significantly for the next couple of fiscal years. She moved to the comp plan area focus, and the new comp plan. As far as the different objectives and strategies identified, those would be what they will be working with the Department on over the next five years. She pointed out Strategy C, expanding the transition programs and tenancy supports to enable individuals to live in the least restrictive housing option of their choosing. That was meant to be very broad to include institutional discharge, whether that be through Corrections or through a health or social service program. It is intended to really look at that transition period for individuals to become more self-sufficient and regain skills that they may have lost in an institutional environment.

CHAIR MORAN asked if that also addressed youth who were aging out of the foster care system.

MS. BARSTAD replied potentially. There are a number of youth that get placed in institutional settings. As far as a more home-like environment, that would not necessarily be considered institutional. She added that groups of individuals would certainly be covered under other strategies for supportive housing and other specialized programs to prevent homelessness for that really vulnerable youth category.

TRUSTEE FIMON asked about Strategy B and the whole situation with homeless management.

MS. BARSTAD replied that there is a lot of data in interoperability, and is work that had already been initiated. The Division of Public Health has a unit working on this actively. They have been engaging with the homeless coalitions, with Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, as well as the different divisions within the Department of Health. She added that it was unknown yet where the main system of data would be housed. The key is to insure that there is interoperability so that these different data systems can talk with each other. She anticipated that the homeless management information system would continue, but will unlikely be able to contain health information because of some of the confidentiality standards necessary for health programs. It is critical that the systems talk to each other and get meaningful data needed for person care to insure long-term housing stability. She continued to some future trends and areas to explore that were identified from the budget, different conversations, and different work to initiate or the desire to initiate with partners. She stated that since the mission is targeting beneficiaries, they want to make sure that those programs are intentionally inclusive of the beneficiary population. She turned the rest of the presentation to Daniel Delfino, the Director of Planning for Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, to share some examples of programs they are working on that highlight those partnerships and initiatives to move the State forward.

MR. DELFINO stated that they have a little over 20 programs, a combination of State and Federal money, that either builds things that people will live in that is consistent with their mission, or helps people who do not have a place to live find a place to live, or people who are experiencing crisis in their housing stability to maintain their housing stability. He talked about their service programs to help people find housing, maintain housing stability, and then explained their development initiatives and some of the challenges being worked on across the

state in that space. He continued to the general housing market's backdrop to see how these programs operate. He explained that a lot of things stem from their partnerships, and the Trust is a longstanding partner. They have also worked with the Rasmuson Foundation as a direct funding partner with the Denali Commission. He continued through his presentation, answering questions as he went along. He talked about the technology and partnerships. He added that the challenge is the development, which is not equitably distributed according to the layers of need. The development programs are utilized by the development capacity with the people who work the programs. These are rather complicated, and there is a skill set that was developed around this program and in the industry.

TRUSTEE MORRIS thanked Mr. Delfino for a great presentation and complimented him on some innovations mentioned in the program. An app was innovated that led to having decision-making capacity as close to people being served as possible. Dramatic differences have been made, and those are important things.

CHAIR MORAN asked for any further questions. She thanked Mr. Delfino for the informative presentation.

MOTION: A motion to adjourn the Program & Planning Committee meeting was made by TRUSTEE FIMON; seconded by TRUSTEE BOYLES.

After a roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Fimon, yes; Trustee Boyles, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)

(Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Program & Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.)